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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ANKARA 005841

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SUBJECT: APNSA HADLEY'S MEETING WITH NSC SECRETARY GENERAL  
ALPOGAN

Classified By: CDA Nancy McEldowney, Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

1. SUMMARY: In a one-hour meeting with APSNA Hadley on September 23, National Security Council Secretary General Yigit Alpogan spoke of the importance of opening new channels of dialogue to enhance the U.S.-Turkish relationship. The GOT appreciates U.S. support with the accession process, but what will happen next is up in the air. The image of the U.S. in Turkey would soar if the U.S. hands over several PKK leaders as the Turkish public has concluded that the U.S. is not fighting the PKK. The GOT is concerned with the fate of the Turkomen in Iraq and asserts that there is no influence on Iraqi Shiites from Iran. If the U.S. wants Turkey to be a tangible presence in Central Asia, Turkey will need U.S. backing. The GOT has not been able to assess the administration of Iran yet and any non-peaceful use of Iranian nuclear power would not be tolerated. END SUMMARY.

2. (C) SecGen Alpogan opened by stating that the U.S.-Turkish relationship is a strategic relationship in which respect for human rights, rule of law, freedom and democracy are the cornerstones. He commented that the U.S. and Turkey must go beyond bilateral relations and look together to Southeast Europe (the Balkans), the Eastern Mediterranean, the Black Sea, the Caucasuses, and Central Asia. Syria, Iran, Iraq and maybe Lebanon were areas that U.S.-Turkish cooperation "might be fruitful."

3. (C) Alpogan said that a high-level civilian strategy group, using the current military group as a model, would be a way to "fill in the gaps" of this "rich menu" of international concerns, and that Turkey is ready to participate. Hadley agreed that there is a need to institutionalize and regularize U.S.-Turkish discussions on all levels, noting that there needs to be a common frame of reference. Alpogan stated that more channels of communication need to be opened. On this point, Hadley invited Alpogan to Washington to further discussions.

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The European Union  
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4. (C) Alpogan thanked the U.S. for its behind the scenes support for Turkey's bid for EU accession. He stated that Turkey is unhappy at this stage of the process and that Turkey "did not merit the counter-declaration." Alpogan bitingly remarked that 600,000 people (Cyprus) have taken 450 million people hostage and "they are dictating to everyone else." He stated that U.S. efforts are valuable to reaching the October 3rd goal, but said that he was not really sure what might happen in the meantime.

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Iraq, the PKK, and the Turkomen  
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5. (C) Turning to Iraq, Alpogan expressed that Turkey wants a sovereign, independent, unified and united Iraq. Dismemberment of Iraq would be a catastrophe which might make for a realigned Middle East. Alpogan stated that while the Kurdish and Sunni nationalism elements are problems, the Shiite element is the most dangerous due to the interest of Iran, Bahrain, Kuwait and the petrol-producing provinces of eastern Saudi Arabia.

6. (C) Though Alpogan said he did not want to dwell on the issue, he noted that the image of the U.S. in Turkey is directly linked to the PKK issue. The Turkish public perceives that the U.S. is not acting on the PKK problem and Alpogan stated that "something has to be done." The GOT is working hand-in-hand with the U.S. in the fight against terrorism, but wonders why the U.S. is not fighting the PKK after deeming it a terrorist group. Alpogan opined that the prestige of the U.S. would skyrocket with the handing over of a few PKK leaders, as it did when the U.S. returned PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan to Turkey. The factions provoking the Turkish public against the U.S. would also be dealt a blow.

7. (C) The Turks are watching developments in Kirkuk, Mosul and Talafar (three Turkomen cities) with keen interest. Alpogan stated that the GOT was disappointed that Article 53,

maintaining Kirkuk's autonomous status, was not included in the Iraqi constitution. If there is Kurdish governance in Northern Iraq, the GOT will be "disturbed," according to Alpogan. He further stated that if Kirkuk goes, Iraq will not stay together, so Kirkuk's special status must be maintained "at all costs." Alpogan asserted that the Turkomen population is between 8-10 percent in Iraq and that the Turkomen are "always in our minds." (Comment: Many western experts believe that Turkomen comprise less than one or two percent of the population in Iraq. End Comment.)

18. (C) Hadley agreed that Alpogan's points were good and that they further underline the need for a strong government in Iraq. He said that the new government in December would have to address these points.

19. (C) Alpogan added that as long as the ideological shift between the Majlis Taklit and the Velayati Fikr continues, there will be no influence from Iran on the Shiites of Iraq. Hadley expressed that the U.S. view is the same and that the U.S. has been surprised at the level of concern of neighboring Shiite nations looking at Iranian influence in Iraq. Former Turkish Ambassador to Iran, Selahattin Alpar interjected that when and how the U.S. leaves Iraq is important and not to underestimate the brigades that were trained in Iran.

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Turkey in Central Asia  
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10. (C) Alpogan was the Turkish Ambassador to Turkmenistan. Turkey and the countries in Central Asia have religious, ethnic and historical ties to the area. The Turkish private sector has invested 15 billion USD and have rebuilt Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan, and to a lesser extent Uzbekistan. Alpogan admitted, however, that if the U.S. was looking to Turkey to be a tangible presence in the region that it would need U.S. backing. He also admitted that Turkey's approach in the Ozal era of being "the big brother" was not right and that "we learned our lesson."

11. (C) Hadley stated that the U.S. and Turkey share a common interest to spread common values and democracy in Central Asia. The U.S. sees Turkey's role in the region as an inspiration, not a model. He noted that Russia sees the U.S. as trying to keep it out of the region, but that the U.S. objective, like Turkey's, is to spread freedom and democracy.

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Iran  
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12. (C) On Iran, Alpogan stated that the basic tenet is that Iran is Turkey's neighbor. To date, the GOT has been treating Iran carefully. Alpogan stated that Iran hasn't "opened their cards yet" and that no one yet knows what kind of administration Iran has. He asserted that the Iranian people are more interested in a better standard of living now and that the Iranian president was only elected because the public was tired of following reformers. The GOT supports Iran's nuclear ambition for peaceful means, but anything more will not be tolerated.

13. (C) Alpogan stated that Iran wants to pipe its natural gas to Europe through Turkey. He said that there is pressure from both Iran and Europe, but that the GOT knows how the U.S. feels.

14. (C) Hadley asked how the U.S. and Turkey can keep the people of Iran's aspirations for more freedom alive without empowering the current regime with claims of U.S. interference. Alpogan noted with a smile that the current Iranian minister of foreign affairs and his deputy were nearly declared persona non grata when they were posted in Turkey, which shows that "life is not so easy for us (Turkey) now." Amb Alpar noted that the only thing that changed in the Iranian government was its president - the parliament and religious leadership are the same. In response to Hadley's question of keeping aspirations alive, Alpar noted that the younger generation wants more freedom, but he is not sure that they will be able to achieve it.

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